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ABSTRACT

In introducing drama into the elementary classroom it is wise to start by having children portray that which they have experienced. First attempts should be short and simple with later attempts more complex and of longer duration. The first section of this bulletin offers numerous types of preliminary activities. The remainder of the booklet presents two experiences that are culminative as examples of what can be done with elementary school children and drama. The first experience described is the Medieval Day, an attempt to immerse the child in an environment in which things happen in a spontaneous, though structured, manner. It fills an entire school day in which the children and the teacher assume roles and engage in activities befitting those roles. Preparations for these role-centered activities are the core of the unit as the Day is its culmination. The second experience presented is the production and staging of a play. A description of the actual production of "Wizard of Oz" at one elementary school provides examples. A glossary of stage terms completes the bulletin. (TO)

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Drama in the Elementary School

The University of the State of New York/THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Bureau of Elementary Curriculum Development/Albany, New York 12224
1974

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DRAMA IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

FOREWORD

Acting is natural to young children. They love to role play and act out familiar stories and situations. This natural bent of children can be capitalized upon to strengthen their understanding of their world and also lead to a greater appreciation of drama as an art form.

In introducing drama into the classroom,it is wise to start by having children portray that which they have experienced. Later, children's imagination will lead to interpretation of other experiences. First attempts should be short and simple. Later attempts may be of longer duration and greater complexity. This publication presents two experiences that are culminative. Before staging this type of presentation, children and teachers should experience many informal dramatizations. The first section of this bulletin offers some lead-up typesof activities. The two culminative experiences are examples of what can be done on a greater scale. It is hoped that the reading of these experiences will encourage and assist teachers who wish to incorporate drama into their programs.

The Department extends its appreciation to the many people who assisted in the production of this publication. Lee Baldwin, Northport; Hal Carter, Northport; Judith Hall, Huntington; Maura Elise Livingston, New Rochelle; and Lawrence Coulter, associate in performing arts, have all been contributors. Charlotte Koons, Northport,and Michael Penta, Irvington, provideo the basic material for this bulletin and Dorothy M. Foley, associate, Bureau of Elementary Curriculum Development, coordinated the project and prepared the manuscript for press.

Robert H. Johnstone
Chief, Bureau of Elementary
Curriculum Development

Gordon E. Van Hooft
Director, Division of Curriculum
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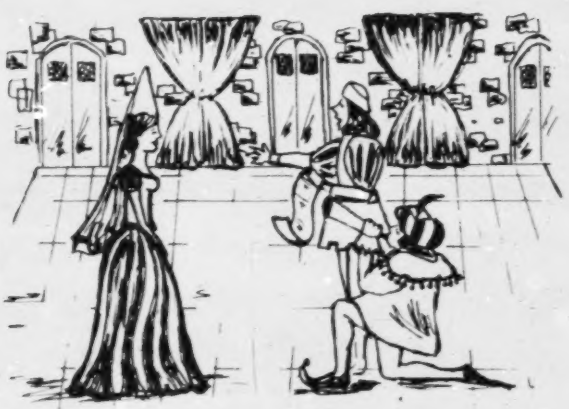

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DRAMA IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Drama involves controlled bodily movements. Simple rhythmics help children learn to make their bodies work for them. Most physical education programs include rhythmics and circle games. The classroom teacher may build on these by providing opportunities for the children to utilize rhythmics in other areas of the curriculum.

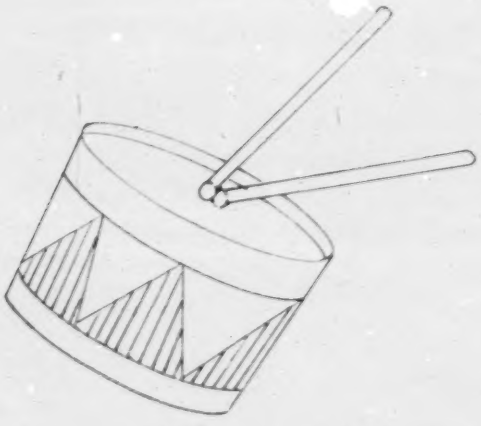
SIMPLE RHYTHMIC ACTIVITIES

Have the children listen to a slow steady beat of a drum. Ask a small group of children to walk about the room to this beat as it is repeated. Have the children listen and react to other tempos. Encourage them to walk, hop, skip, and run in time to the beat they hear.

Discuss with the children sounds that have rhythm. Have them move to sounds such as the ticking of a clock, a dripping faucet, and wind blowing through the trees.

Teach the children a dance song such as "Brother, Come and Dance With Me". Then have them work in pairs to create a dance which will fit with the words and the repeating melodic pattern. Have each pair perform its dance for the group. Encourage comments on the various interpretations.

Play for the children musical recordings which lend themselves easily to rhythmics. Marches, waltzes, and folk dances invoke particular reactions from the children. Compositions such as "Carnival of the Animals", "Steel Foundry", and "Sorcerer's Apprentice" are suitable for more interpretative reactions from the children.



Refer to "Music K-6, Experimental Education" distributed by the Bureau of Elementary Curriculum Development, State Education Department for additional rhythmic activities.

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CHARACTERIZATION THROUGH MOVEMENT

Appreciation for role portrayal begins when the child assumes various roles through bodily movements. From simple experiences in pantomime to sustaining a performance is simply a matter of putting a characterization through a series of actions and adding voice.

Make flash cards with action words.

JUMP	RUN	SKIP	WALK	TURN
GALLOP	STRETCH	STOOP	WIGGLE	

Have a child pick a card and pantomime the word for the other children to guess. The first to guess the word would then pick a card and pantomime the word he chooses.

Later make flash cards with sentences.

Ice skate around a rink.

Climb a ladder and paint a house.

As the children develop proficiency in this, sentences might be devised in such a way that they build into a short story. Then, as one group carries out a sequence of activities, the other children might try writing down the story as it unfolds. Children may also try writing the movement scenarios for classmates.

Choose a familiar story and isolate a character doing something. For example, using "The King of the Golden River," have various children illustrate how the king might rise from his throne before and after his wish is granted. Then have the children illustrate different characters doing the same basic movement, such as:

an old man getting up from a chair
a lady in a formal rising from a chair
a scared person rising from a chair
a sleepy person getting up.

Have the children work in small groups to devise pantomimes of familiar stories. After the groups have had sufficient time to work out their action sequences, have each demonstrated to the total group. Encourage the children to evaluate each performance upon its completion.

Play charades with the children Have them write the names of familiar stories or books on 3 x 5 cards. Put these in a box and then have individual children act out the title while the group tries to guess what story is being depicted. The first one to guess the title might be the next character.

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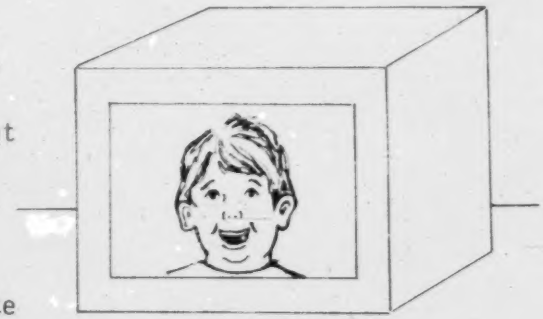
CONVEYING MOOD, FEELING, EMOTION THROUGH MOVEMENT

Each of us conveys a multitude of feelings and moods through our movements. The way we carry ourselves reveals much of our self-image. Our body language, our individual language of gestures, though highly structured by the society in which we live, is still revealing of our personalities. Activities which encourage the child's individual body style should be stressed.

Cut out one side of a cardboard box to resemble a television screen. Place the box on a desk and have a child sit behind it so that only his face is visible through the "screen." Give the child a card with a word such as sorrow, fear, or embarrassment on it. As he acts out the word, encourage the group to guess the feeling being demonstrated. After a number of children have had an opportunity to be the actor on the screen, have some children demonstrate the same words using their whole body. Lead the children to recognize that it is usually easier to interpret emotions when the whole body is being used rather than facial expressions alone.



Elicit from the children synonyms for adjectives such as brave, sad, happy, and tense.

Example:

brave - bold, heroic, courageous
sad - unhappy, miserable, blue
happy - gay, joyous, glad
tense - nervous, agitated, irritable

Have a child pick a group of synonyms and project each word through movement. Ask the group to try to differentiate between the synonyms. Elicit gestures and actions which help convey the distinction between similar emotions.

Encourage individual children to illustrate for the group their interpretation of particular persons going through a specific action, such as:

a very old lady walking
a small child throwing a ball
a timid person entering a room

Discuss with the children the mood conveyed by each portrayal.

MEDIEVAL DAY

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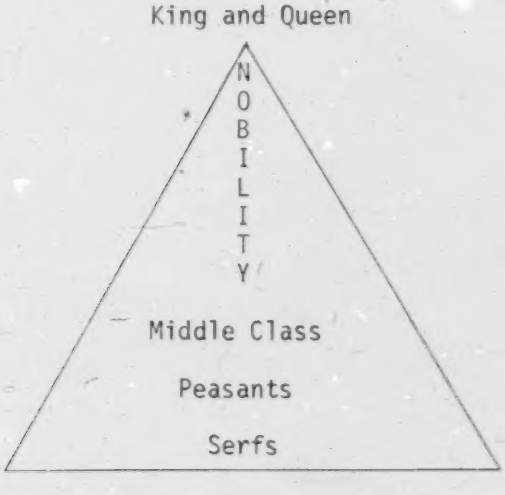
The concept of a DAY is an attempt to immerse the child in an environment in which things happen in a spontaneous, though structured manner. It is an entire school day in which every child and the teacher assume roles and engage in activities as befits these roles. Preparations for these role-centered activities are the core of the unit as the DAY is its culmination.

OBJECTIVES OF MEDIEVAL DAY

To, literally, bring to life a microcosm of Medieval society.
To encourage the ability of children to sustain an assumed role.
To help the children become familiar with the structure of Medieval Society.
To engage the children in a variety of arts, crafts, music, movement, and verbal activities.

BACKGROUND

Before participating in a Medieval Day, the children should become familiar with the society of that era. They should have many opportunities to explore the time period so that they might draw some generalizations and make some inferences about life during the middle ages. The stable, inflexible class structure of Medieval society should be analyzed. Perhaps a group of children might illustrate this society in the classical pyramid.



NOBILITY

Upper class - nobles, dukes, counts, barons, and knights. Usually vassals to a powerful lord or king and queen.

Squires - young noblemen in attendance to knights.

Pages - children that attend the ladies of the castle and, in return, are educated by them.

MIDDLE CLASS

Merchants, master craftsmen, craftsmen, journeymen, apprentices.

PEASANTS AND SERFS

Small farmers, tenant farmers, manor servants, laborers, villeins, cotters and others directly bound to the lord of the manor in return for protection, such as jesters, tumblers, minstrels, etc.

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PREPARATION ACTIVITIES

Once the children have formed some general concepts about the era, plans for Medieval Day may be initiated. The first step might be the assignment of roles. Since accident of birth assigned roles during the middle ages, role assignment might best be made as a matter of luck, such as picking titles out of a hat. Children should then research their individual roles so that they will be able to prepare for their day.

The activities that follow are suggestions. The imagination of the children and teacher will surely lead to many more.

ACTIVITIES FOR THE TOTAL GROUP

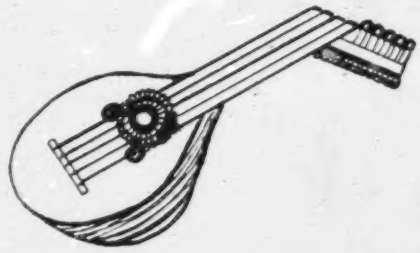
MUSIC

A small group of children may research the musical instruments in vogue from 500-1450 AD. If possible, these may be obtained and demonstrated for the class.

Some children may work with the music teacher to locate songs popular during Medieval times. They might then teach some of these to the class.

A group of children might compose songs in the mode of the music popular during Medieval times. These might be taped for playback on Medieval Day.

An interesting project for some children might be the researching of music notation of the middle ages. Samples might be reproduced for class examination and discussion.



GAMES AND DANCES

A group of children could make a list of familiar games that were popular during the middle ages. These would probably include circle games, blind mand's bluff, and bobbing for apples.

Some children may be interested in searching for Medieval games which have not survived to modern times, or that have been changed considerably over the years. They could then teach the class these games in the original version.

Folk dances were popular during the middle ages. Children, working with the music and/or physical education teacher, may wish to learn some of these.

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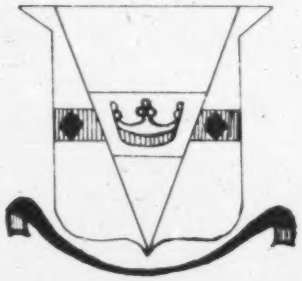
ARTS AND CRAFTS



In preparation for the Day, children could create decorations for the Great Hall. Such decorations might include coats of arms, crests, banners, and tapestry murals.

Props might be made for the Great Hall. These might include thrones, fireplaces, candelabrum, and tablecloths.

Children might work in small groups to design costumes appropriate for their roles. Library books and textbooks will be a useful resource in this project. Parents may be enlisted to help the children make their costumes. Oaktag, old pillowcases and sheets, scraps of material, and bits of lace and rickrack can produce very effective costumes with a little imagination.

INDIVIDUAL OR SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES

LANGUAGE ARTS

Knights and squires might prepare adventure tales to share with other members of the court. These could be written down and made into a book for all to read.

Knights and squires could prepare on scrolls the rules of chivalry and/or oath of fealty. These could be posted on the wall of the Great Hall on the day of the festival.

The magicians could prepare a repretoire of jokes, riddles, horoscopes, predictions of the future, and simple scientific experiments to demonstrate to the court.

The herald, working with the total group, could prepare a program of activities for the festival. On Medieval Day, he would be responsible for announcing these and any announcements the King and Queen requested.

Pages could write poems about their lords and ladies. These might be decorated as Medieval manuscripts and posted on the wall of the Great Hall.

The King and Queen might work with the nobles of the court to devise a number of short skits. These skits should depict typical activities of the court.

The ladies of the court might write original fairy tales to be told to the pages and ladies-in-waiting. These might be made into a book of fairy tales.

Ladies of the court, working with pages, might devise short skits illustrating their roles. Such skits might include lessons in chivalry, dames' school, and herbal remedies.

Serf, peasants, and farmers could prepare reports to be presented on festival day. These might include livestock reports, gameskeeper reports, or compositions such as:

Why I Came to the Castle to Seek Protection
How I Saved My Lord's Livestock
I Found My Lady's Falcon

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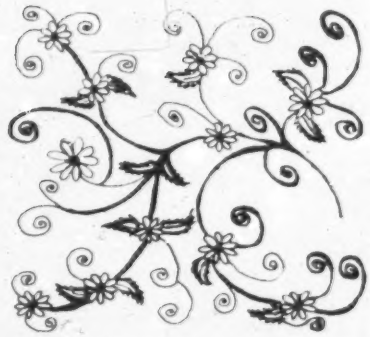
ARTS AND CRAFTS

Ladies of the court might design and execute their own stitcheries. Applique, needlepoint, crewel embroidery and weaving would all be appropriate.



Swords, lances, and banner staves can be made of wood. Fathers or shop teachers might be enlisted to help the knights, nobles and others in making these.

Knights and nobles could design crests for their shields. Shields can be made of heavy cardboard, plywood, or old garbage can covers. Adding a little liquid soap to school paints will help the paint adhere to almost any surface.

A large stitchery mural, to hang as a tapestry, could be designed and created by an interested group of children. This might tell a story about court life.

CULMINATION

Plans for festival day need to be carefully made by the children. Through group discussion the children should consider how the day is to be arranged, what assistance they will need from outside sources, what problems might be encountered. Decisions need to be made by the group so that all will have a good idea of what to expect the day to be like and what is expected of them. Each child should be aware of his individual contributions and responsibilities so that he will be prepared. Time schedules might be established and deadlines set.

Items for group consideration might include:

SETTING

Will the classroom be transformed into the Great Hall or need arrangements be made for a larger room?
Are decorations that individual groups are working on going to create the desired coordinated effect?
How should the furniture be arranged?
When should the Great Hall be set up?
Who will coordinate this work?

INVITATIONS

Who should be invited?
Should guests be invited for the whole day? For the afternoon? For lunch?

REFRESHMENTS

Should lunch and/or snacks be served?
What should the menu be?
Who will prepare each dish to be served?

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SCHEDULE

What activities are planned?
How can the day be scheduled so that all activities will be included?
Should more than one activity go on at the same time?
Which activities will require participation by all?
Who will devise the final schedule?

CLEANUP

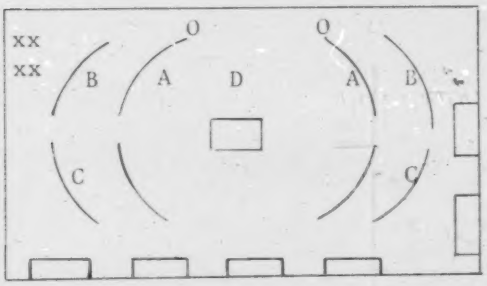
What projects should be reserved for another occasion?
Which projects do individuals want to take home?
Who will accept responsibility to see the room is put back in order?

FESTIVAL DAY

On festival day, each member of the group should assume his assigned role. All preplanned activities should be carried out and spontaneous activities executed in the manner of a Medieval court. The day should be fun for all and an experience that will provide the children with an opportunity to enjoy the fruits of their work.

All preparations and decorations should be completed prior to festival day. The Great Hall should be set up, tapestries and other decorations hung, schedule of activities established, and major problems resolved so that the day itself may run smoothly.

A possible setting might be:



xx - Thrones for Kings, Queens, Teachers, Visitors
O - Heralds
Row A - Knights and Ladies
Row B - Squires, Pages
Row C - Commoners
Space D - Activity Area
▭ - Tables to be used for feast

Festival Day schedule should intersperse physical and verbal activities so that the pace is varied and all groups have some active involvement alternating with the more passive role of spectator.

Commencement for a medieval festival might be:

. Children and teachers dress in costume and collect properties.

. Procede to classrooms where the group has been invited to show their costumes. The Herald may proclaim the groups arrival by an announcement such as: "Hear, Hear, Ye! We are on our way to a great festival. We come in peace and ask safe passage through your kingdom."

. Group proceeds to Great Hall in a Grand March. The Herald marches in first and announces the others in order of rank from highest to lowest. If there are two or more kingdoms participating, members of the same rank are introduced by their respective heralds in turn. Each person should assume the posture of his role, for example:

    Nobles - dignified, regal movements
    Tumblers - tumble in
    Minstrels, etc. - strumming and leisurely movements
    Commoners - rather disorganized entrance

. Seating in the Great Hall is according to rank. The Kings and Queens enter first and sit on their thrones. As other members of each kingdom enter, they pay allegiance to their soverign and then take their appropriate seats.

. When the court has assembled, the Heralds read their proclamations of the Festival. As the day's activities proceed, the Herald announces each event.

Festival Day may be viewed as having three major segments:

THE FESTIVAL

Performances by tumblers, magicians, court jesters, etc.
Dancing
Presentation of masterpieces, stories, reports
Games such as Blind Man's Bluff
Songs

THE FEAST

It is very effective to have foods, implements, and table settings as authentic as possible. Parents, teachers, and children might plan together to make the meal authentic, easy to serve, and appetizing. Pottage (soup), breads and cheese, fried chicken pieces, and fruit would be a suitable menu.

Serfs set and serve the tables. The nobles are seated at the head tables. Each squire and page attends his or her lady or knight. Only when they are given leave to do so are pages, squires, and serfs permitted to eat.

To add atmosphere, the monk may compose a blessing and medieval music, such as lute songs, old English folk songs and compositions by Anthony Vivaldi and Henry Purcell may be played. The rules of table manners in vogue during the middle ages may be researched and read at the banquet.

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At the end of the meal, serfs clear the table and return the hall to its arena-like atmosphere. Other members of the court participate in informal conversation and prepare for the tournament.

THE TOURNAMENT

The tournament should consist of competitive type games in which two parties or teams contest for a prize. Although only knights originally participated in the tournaments, some games might also be played by other members of the court. The following suggested variations of tournament games should prove fun for all.

"Playing at the Quintain." Tetherball would be a safe, modern version of this contest.

"Archery." A bean bag toss, aiming at a target, would be a good substitution.

"Jousting." An exciting version of this would be to use gym scooters as horses with combatants steered by squires. The combatants would try to dismount each other using only one arm.

"Sword Fighting." Using wooden swords and previously made shields, the knights can stage ritual sword fights.

Closing Ritual - Prizes may be distributed to tournament winners. Some squires may be dubbed knights and some pages may be promoted to squires.

EVALUATION AND FOLLOWUP

After Festival Day, the children should evaluate the entire expreience. Learnings, skills, and understandings might be reviewed and specifics listed. Written reports, compositions, and stories might be reexamined for organization, development, and creativity.

Since a major portion of this project focuses on role playing, this part of the activity should be carefully reviewed. Children should be encouraged to express feelings they had in portraying a specific role, the factors that made some people's portrayal more convincing than others, and the values to be gained in assuming another role for a short period of time.

STAGING A PLAY

The production of a play can be as simple or as elaborate as the creativity, talent and time of the people involved will permit. At the elementary school level, engaging performances can be staged with little technical assistance or expertise. Effective performances can be produced with sparse and limited facilities with a little preplanning, imagination, and enthusiasm.

The following material is presented to assist the teacher interested in developing a stage production. The material the teacher and children choose to stage and the age and experience of the children will determine to a great extent the character of the final performance. However, it must be remembered that the purpose of such a production is to provide an opportunity for children to experience the work involved in staging a play and to introduce children to the whole scope of performing arts as related to drama.

There are many occupations involved in the theater. The teacher may wish to examine some of these with the children before actual work on the production starts. Such investigation may help the children choose the type of production they wish to stage, lead them into new areas, and assist individuals in selecting the manner in which they might wish to participate.

Occupations in the theater include writers, actors, directors, set designers, costume designers, prop men, sound effects engineers, lighting technicians, and publicity personnel. As work on the production begins, some children may find they can fulfill more than one role. Such duplication of jobs will give children an opportunity for wider experiences and help broaden their understandings of the work and cooperation needed to stage a show.

THEATER OCCUPATIONS

ACTORS

The actors tell the story to the audience. To be effective, they must assume the role of the characters in the play and convince the audience that they are these persons. In order to do this, the actors need to be thoroughly familiar with the play. Each actor must understand the character he is to portray and the relationship of this character to others in the play. He should know how each character might react to a specific situation or person. The following rules of acting will assist young performers in making their dramatization more convincing. These rules are accepted conventions, although there are exceptions to each rule.*

*Rules of Acting and Rules of Directing adapted from CHILDREN AND THE THEATRE, by Caroline E. Fisher and Hazel G. Robertson. Stanford University Press, Stanford University, California. 1940.

Rules Pertaining to Lines

Learn lines very early in the rehearsal period.

Give cues accurately in order that the actor speaking after you will not be confused.

Interrupt promptly on a broken line. Interrupt too soon rather than too late to make it seem more natural.

Pick up cues instantly. Do not wait until the cue has been delivered to recollect your speech, but be ready to begin upon it the instant the last word is out of the other actor's mouth.

Keep the illusion of the first time; do not let the lines sound mechanical.

Do not prompt other actors while on stage.

Rules Pertaining to the Voice

Try to make the voice suitable to your characterization, but do not exaggerate a manner of speaking to the extent that it fails to sound convincing.

Be sure all lines can be clearly heard by every member of the audience.

Speak distinctly and do not sacrifice clarity to speed. Immense volume is seldom necessary if words are well enunciated and are directed toward the audience. Do not appear to be addressing the audience, however.

A stage whisper should have some sound.

Rules Pertaining to Stage Movement

Prepare for your entrance before your cue has actually been spoken. Be ready some time in advance and enter just an instant before the cue so that a line or action will not be lost.

Be sure each movement, however slight, has a dramatic purpose as well as a technical purpose.

Cross on the downstage side of another actor or group unless otherwise directed.

Move on others' lines only when specially directed to do so because of some dramatic motivation.

Keep turned toward the audience as much of the time as is possible and natural.

Rules Pertaining to Body Movement

Start all motions from the center of the body and have them appear to flow outward toward the extremity.

In pointing or gesturing, use the arm nearest the person or thing pointed out.

Use natural gestures.

Avoid fidgeting and distracting mannerisms.

Be aware of straight lines; they are usually very unnatural and stiff looking.

Use body movements that help characterize the role you are portraying.

DIRECTOR

The director's task is to integrate all the elements of production. Therefore, he must know what these elements are and how the desired unity can best be obtained. He is responsible for directing the action of the play and molding the vocal interpretation of the actors. As he continually seeks to control attention values, he should select and emphasize only what is important. The following suggestions pertain to the mechanics of direction and to more general matters of play production as a whole.

Preparation

Study the play thoroughly before rehearsals begin.

Discover the playwright's essential theme or idea and his reason for writing the play. Steep yourself in as much background material as possible.

Study the manners and customs of the period in which the play is laid.

Decide upon the style of the production and how best to achieve it.

Design the ground plan to fit the needs of the actors. Allow for no unused furniture or entrances.

Anticipate every problem. Be prepared to discuss every phase of your impending production with the actors and the technical assistants.

Starting Rehearsals

Introduce the play to the group in such a way as to stimulate interest.

Discuss the play's meaning with participants.

Arouse enthusiastic cooperation from all.

Help the actors understand the desired characterizations and interrelationships between characters.

Help set designers, costume designers, and other craftsmen and technicians to formulate some ideas about settings, etc.

Considerations of Groupings

Think of grouping in terms of visibility and audibility.

Arrange groups so that the most important acting areas are for the most important bits of action.

Group so that the one thing that is most important is highlighted.

Consider stage balance and the shape of the setting when grouping.

Vary grouping according to the action.

Do not sacrifice meaning for the sake of a pretty picture.

Consideration of Movement

Movement should spring from the situation or actors' lines.

Action plot may be changed to fit circumstances.

All movement should have a dramatic purpose; that is, one logically apparent to the audience.

Significance of entrances and exits may be emphasized by purposeful pauses, by quick movements, by lines or sound effects off stage, or by suspense tricks such as shadows.

All insignificant or distracting movements should be eliminated.

Controlling the Timing of the Performance

Time the action to suit the mood of the scene and play.

Shorten the time element for activities such as eating, reading, and writing.

Work for tempo in dialogue.

Rehearse with properties early to facilitate ease and rhythm of use.

Developing Atmosphere, Mood and Climaxes

Seek proportion, unity, and emphasis in order to build the proper mood.

Utilize simple lighting and sound effects to create and change the mood or build climaxes.

Utilize various tempos, volumes, pitches, and intensity according to the dramatic effectiveness.

Guide the actors in utilizing effective pauses.

General Guidelines

Encourage individual characterizations, not impersonations.

Check overacting.

Insist on accurate memorization of cue lines.

Be creative. Have fun.

Be sure dress rehearsals are complete in every detail.

Listen to dress rehearsals as if for the first time.

Maintain pleasant relationships with all others in the production.

SET DESIGNERS

The set designers work very closely with all other members of the crew. They must be thoroughly familiar with the play and think always in terms of providing the appropriate illusion for the performance. The following suggestions provide some guidelines for developing sets for an elementary school production.

Preparation

Read the play and sit in on discussions between the director and actors.

Listen to the actors read the play.

List the various scenes in which the action takes place.

Research the time period of the play.

Developing Sets

Using construction paper, make a number of sketches of various elements of the scenes to be depicted.

Discuss sketches with the director and other members of the crew. Look for suggestions and constructive criticism.

Experiment, coloring each sketch in a variety of ways to develop the appropriate mood.

Making Sets

Flats should be made as background with other properties to be used kept in mind.

Choose material for the flat sets which will be easy to work on, be easy to change, and fitting for the circumstances.

From previously made sketches, draw the scenery on the backdrop with charcoal or pencil.

If scenery flats are available, these are most suitable for scenes which take place on the full stage. If flats are not available, rolls of brown paper, or cardboard, taped together are quite effective.

Paint the scene with tempera paints. Sponges and large paint brushes are best for doing large areas. Put details in last.

Choosing Properties

Use as few props as necessary.

Choose properties that are scaled to the size of the stage.

Borrow pieces of furniture, such as sofas, chairs, tables.

Arrange properties so they will facilitate the actions of the play.

Use cardboard boxes, paint, crepe paper, foil, etc., to create imaginative pieces.

COSTUME DESIGNERS

For performances in the elementary school, costumes should be simple, inexpensive, and illusionary. Costume designers should set guidelines and then help each actor create his own outfit.

Establishing Guidelines

The costume designer should become very familiar with the play and the characters in it.

Research the time period in which the play takes place.

Make sketches of the types of costumes the various actors might wear.

Discuss costume possibilities with the director, cast, and other members of the crew.

Draw up suggested lists of materials to be used in creating costumes.

Organize the cast into groups for the making of costumes.

Making Costumes

As often as possible, have actors use clothing they already own as basis of costumes.

Old sheets can be used effectively for special effects in costuming, for ghosts, angels, witches or for capes, togas, etc. In some cases the sheets may need to by dyed.

Embellishthe basic costumes with crepe paper, foil, patches of other material, etc.

Borrow articles from parents, teachers, or friends to finish off the costumes. Jewelry, hats, handbags, canes, and the like can give authenticity to a character.

Wigs can be made out of yarn or cotton.

General Guidelines

Bright colored costumes give a feeling of gaiety.

Dark colors are ominous.

Costumes should be comfortable, durable, and easily repaired.

Costumes should be designed for freedom of movement and safety.

Too much variety in costuming can cause a feeling of disorganization. When many people are on the stage at one time, there should be some unity in the style and costume colors.

The actors playing leading parts should have unique costumes, unless there is a dramatic or technical reason for them to be dressed as the others.

PROP MEN

Prop men are responsible for gathering together the needed properties, keeping them in good condition, and having them available to the actors when and where necessary.

Preparation

Read the play and sit in on discussions between the director and the actors.

Listen to the actors read the play.

Discuss sets with the set designers.

Make a list of needed properties.

Gathering Props

Elicit assistance from parents and teachers in obtaining furniture and household items.

Seek assistance from classmates, art teachers, and shop teachers for ideas on how to make such things as trees, flowers, etc.

Publish a list of any unusual items needed, such as a telephone, a hat rack, grandfather clock, and distribute it throughout the school

General Guidelines

Large props that are to be moved on and off the stage need to be of such proportions that they are easily handled.

A specific area should be set aside off stage for each property.

A copy of the script should be marked so that properties will be placed on the stage at the right time and in the right place.

SOUND EFFECT ENGINEERS

Sound effect engineers are responsible for creating authentic and imaginary noises. Often they must incorporate their imaginations and try their ideas out on others in order to achieve the required effect.

Preparation

Read the play and sit in on discussions between the director and cast.

Listen to the actors read the play.

Make a list of needed and/or appropriate sound effects.

Gathering Sound Effects

Elicit assistance of parents, the music teacher, and others in acquiring items such as bells, drums, bugles, whistles.

Get assistance from classmates and teachers for ideas to create special effects such as thunder, horses hooves, a train, etc.

Creating Sound Effects

Try various materials to create special effects and get reactions from classmates and teachers.

Try producing sounds from different spots off stage and in the auditorium to find the most effective area for the sound to come from.

General Guidelines

Have all materials for sound effects set up in a convenient easy to reach spot.

Mark a copy of the script with all sound effects and when they are to be used.

Start early in rehearsals to incorporate sound effects into the play.

Keep timing of sound effects accurate for best dramatic impact.

LIGHTING TECHNICIANS

Often the action of a play can be emphasized through simple lighting techniques. Mood can be established or suddenly changed, an actor's movement can be highlighted or hidden, the audience can be brought in or excluded from the play. The lighting technician is responsible for this.

Preparation

Read the play and sit in on all discussions between the director and the cast.

Listen to the actors read the play.

Make a list of needed and/or appropriate lighting effects.

Ask the custodian or a teacher to show you how to work the lights in the auditorium or room in which the play is to be produced.

Establishing lighting effects

Items such as spotlights and flash lights might be borrowed from parents or teachers.

Experiment with different colored gels over a spot light to create specific effects.

Try flicking stage and/or house lights to signify lightning or the entrance of a particular character.

General Guidelines

Use special lighting only for special dramatic purposes.

Gather ideas from others on how best to create the desired effect.

Mark all special lighting effects on a copy of the script.

Try lighting ideas out on classmates and teachers to see if the desired effect is obtained.

Start early in rehearsals to incorporate lighting effects.

Keep timing of lighting effects accurate for best dramatic impact.

PUBLICITY PERSONNEL

The publicity personnel are responsible for advertising the play. They should build up enthusiasm for the play so that everyone will want to see it.

Preparation

Read the play and sit in on discussions between the director and cast.

Listen to the actors read the play.

Confer frequently with the director, cast, costume designers, set designers, etc. to get a feeling for the production.

Preparing Publicity

Decide the type of publicity which will be needed such as posters, letters, radio (loud speaker), newspaper, etc.

Prepare preliminary sketches or ideas and check them out with the director and crew.

Check poster drawings with set designers and costume designer to be sure they are authentic.

Make posters early enough so that the anticipated audience will have at least a week's notice.

Try out radio announcements and wording of letters on the director and crew.

Photograph sets and costumed actors for newspaper announcements.

General Guidelines

Use simple announcements and posters to draw attention to the coming performance.

Be sure to include the title of the play, the date, time, and place of performance, and the class or group that is giving it on all announcements, letters, and posters.

Give your anticipated audience enough advance notice so that they will be free to come to the play, but not so much that they lose interest in the waiting. A week or two notice for an elementary school production should be sufficient.

Seek assistance from parents and teachers in getting publicity into the local paper.

Be creative! Have fun!

THE "WIZARD OF OZ" AT IRVINGTON, N.Y.

A few years ago, the WIZARD OF OZ was presented by an elementary school at Irvington. The purposes were to satisfy a need in many children who claimed they were never given a chance to work in plays or musicals until they were in high school, and to introduce at an early age the whole scope of the performing arts to most of the children who had never participated in anything like this before.

It may be felt that a show like WIZARD would be too ambitious a project to undertake especially when one recalls the scope of the movie version. However, what may have been done either on Broadway or in Hollywood isn't the only way that any production can be done effectively. Each school, each class, each drama program must do and can do any production with a little thinking, imagination, and enthusiam. Each teacher/director and group of children should approach a stage performance as "our" own show and never try to copy some other production. Even with sparse and limited facilities a show can be produced.

First of all, an announcement was made that a production of WIZARD OF OZ would be staged and that a general meeting would be held for all children who were interested in any aspect of the show. As not everyone wants to be on the stage, this first announcement stressed the participation of those who would like to engage in some of the crafts which are so necessary in producing a show, such as painting, construction of scenery, sewing costumes, locating props, etc. At this initial meeting announcements of audition dates were made and lists were compiled of committees for the show. Subsequently these committees met individually to plan what might be done in each area and to allocate responsibilities. Even with the popularity of WIZARD, it was important to explain what the show was about and to discuss plans in terms of its production. This introduction opens the children's imaginations and some wonderful things can evolve. The characters in the show were described and audition procedures were discussed. When auditions were held, material from the show was provided so the children could read the part they were interested in. As this was a musical, the children sang selections from the show in addition to the reading of lines. Having mentioned this at the first general meeting, two children who play the piano well helped at the auditions, and, more important played the show. One child played the first act, and another played the second act.

In taking WIZARD OF OZ as an example, each scene will be explained in terms of the total production including scenery, costumes, lighting, etc.

ACT I, SCENE 1

The first scene of Act One of WIZARD takes place on a Kansas farm. Two main areas on the stage were used for all the scenes and this first one took place on the apron or that area in front of the curtain. The frame of the house was made from quarter inch plywood, but some strong cardboard could easily be used - the type that refrigerators and stoves come in. The boys constructed a fence from some old branches of trees and a tree stump was brought in by one of the boys. With some farm tools (rakes, hoes, etc.)

and some hay that was scattered about, a very lovely effect of a Kansas farm was established. The painting of the house was done by the "painting crew" who had researched some early American history books for the correct look of an old farmhouse. Having found a suitable picture, they incorporated their own marvelous imaginations and created a farmhouse that had the perfect quality of fantasy in a childlike way although it was still a real farmhouse as it should have been.

Dry color paint which is mixed with water was purchased at a hardware store. This form of paint is much cheaper than the mixed commercial types and easily comes off from clothes and the floor. In other words, the mess is much easier to clean up. Tempera paint from the art room could also be used very effectively.

The costumes for scene one consisted of overalls and blue jeans for the boys, and cotton dresses and aprons for the girls, all extremely easy to come by. The lighting called for nothing special for the actual scene, only that there could be a dimmer light when Dorothy sings "Over The Rainbow" to give a theatrical effect. A spot light was available for this, however, the lights could have remained the same.

At the end of scene one the tornado forms a transition into Scene Two. [First of all, scene two, Munchkinland was set up behind the curtain which we will call "area two." All this was pre-set or set up before the show began.] As the tornado approached, the storm effect with the wind and lighting was accomplished by having several children behind the curtain holding it at the bottom and shaking it. Thunder was created by the shaking of a metal sheet, and lighting by the lights turned on and off. The farmhouse scene was "struck" or removed by the actors running in character as though they were rushing to the tornado shelter and taking the pieces of scenery with them. This caused the impression that they were all being blown away together. Having a small bush tied on a long string to one of the girl's legs gave the illusion of her being pushed by the wind along with the bush. When the tornado was over, the curtain opened and the second scene, Munchkinland, was viewed. This type of scene change is called an "open change" since it is all in view of the audience with the lights never being turned off. It is a very efficient way to do a scene change as the show never stops and the audience remain with the performers.

ACT I, SCENE 2

Scenically, Munchkinland was very simple. Four flats that had flowers painted all over them were used. On one of these was the rural postal box of Dorothy's Kansas home. A bit of the house itself was painted on another flat in the very same style and colors as in the first scene. Chinese lanterns were strung over the top of the stage to give the set a little more dimension. In addition, there were small units of flowers. These were wood bases with a pole connected and then completely covered with crepe paper flowers. These units were wonderful because the children could "hide" behind them and then peep out, and yet they could be seen all the time by the audience. The units could also be moved around very easily to form different angles for variety in the stage picture. Instead of wood bases, cardboard boxes could be used. A pair of tights was stuffed with newspaper, red high heels put on them,and placed under the flat that had the house painted on; of course, this was the wicked witch who was killed when the house landed on her.

The costumes of the actors in scene two were actually creations of each child in the scene. The children were told that color was the main factor and that there should be much evidence of flowers in their costumes with a storybook, dream-like quality. What they came up with was fantastic and exactly right.

Makeup for the Munchkins was moleskin purchased at the drug store. Moleskin is protective covering used in injuries which has a flannel covering on one side and an adhesive backing on the other. Several sheets were painted with different colors and then different shapes and forms were cut out.

The children placed these cutouts on their faces like they would a band-aid and they were, of course, removed very easily. There was no need for any special makeup for the Munchkins other than this.

The Wicked Witch of the West comes into scene two. She was dressed all in black with a black cape, a long black skirt, and a long-pointed dunce cap which she made from black construction paper. In order to give her that monstrous green color, clown white which can be purchased in any drug store was mixed with green food coloring. This was easy to put on and easy to take off. The witch also wore long green fingernails made from green light gels (plastic covering used over lights for color effects). If gels aren't available, green construction paper could be used with a backing of glue to make them a bit stronger and more durable.

The only special effect in this scene was the entrance of the Wicked Witch. The lights were turned on and off again as for the tornado in the first scene. A tympani was used as a sound effect for her entrance. Pounding on a cardboard box would be quite effective.

The Scarecrow also appears in scene two. His costume was, again, quite simple. He wore blue jeans and a plaid shirt with patches sewn on. He used several pieces of rope to tie around his neck, wrists, and ankles with a lot of hay stuffed into his clothes. A straw hat stuffed with straw served as his headpiece. There was no need for special facial makeup.

ACT I. SCENE 3

Dorothy continued her journey into scene three, "On the Road to Emerald City," which went back into area one in front of the curtain. For Scene Three we used a flower unit, some rocks, and a sign that pointed to Emerald City.

One of the flower units from scene two was placed along the road since the road was not too far from Munchkinland and it was logical that these same flowers would still be about. The children brought in some real rocks which they could handle in terms of getting them on and off stage quickly.

We meet the Tin Man in scene three and, indeed, he did have a costume of tin. Tin cans were obtained from the cafeteria and both ends cut out. Two large cans were used for each arm and three for each leg. The cans were wired together at each side and slightly bent to form a joint at the elbow and knee in order that the tin man could move. Then these cans,

after being wired together, were attached to a grey shirt and grey pants that he wore in order to hold them up. For a breast plate, heavy poster paper covered with aluminum foil was used. For his hat, the boy who played the role obtained a large automobile funnel and covered it with foil. This, however, could have been made with construction paper and covered with the same foil. This costume was really quite simple, inexpensive, and yet most effective. The hollow sound from his not having a heart when he hit his chest came from an offstage bass drum.

At the end of scene three the very famous Yellow Brick Road is introduced. To make the show a little more interesting, the performers went into the house (or the audience) to "follow the yellow brick road." Audiences love this kind of participation and actors love it too. Since it wasn't feasible to paint the aisles for the road, the children were asked to ask their mothers if they had some old white sheets that we could use. Plenty were brought in. These were cut into widths of the aisles and sewed in lengths which, in turn, went around the auditorium. The sheets were then dyed yellow, outlines of bricks painted on with brown tempera paint. To actually use the "road," the sheets were rolled onto a large dowel which was held by a Munchkin at each end. Another Munchkin held the first running length so that it could be unraveled as the first two Munchkins skipped down the aisles rolling it onto the floor. The singing and movement of the number was timed so that all the Munchkins in the scene, Dorothy, The Scarecrow, and the Tin Man were back on the stage when the song was over.

ACT I. SCENE 4

While the song "Follow the Yellow Brick Road" was being done, and while the actors were in the audience, another scene change took place out in the open. This involved opening the curtain and cleaning the sign, the rocks, and flower unit from scene three. During the first part of scene three (which plays in front of the curtain in area one) we took strings of crepe paper that had been cut into leaves and hung them over the Munchkinland flats because scene four took place in The Great Forest. Thus when the actors traveled the yellow brick road into the audience and arrived back on stage, they were already in the Great Forest having done a scene change without any sort of break. This was the only scenery we used for the Great Forest - just the leaves covering the flats. We even left the Chinese lanterns hung but didn't light them.

The ever popular Lion appears in this scene. He was dressed in a pair of mustard colored pajamas with long socks. A piece of long material sewn and stuffed with paper and an unraveled iron coat hanger served as his tail. For his headpiece, some brown and gold knitting wool was strung to a woolen snow cap and construction paper ears attached. His costume, as with all the others, was extremely "right" and yet beautifully childlike since he did the creating himself.

In the stage version of WIZARD there are Jitterbugs who are sent by the Wicked Witch to make Dorothy and her pals literally dance themselves to death - they are truly dancing jitterbugs. For their costumes, the Jitterbugs used different colored tights and colored turtle necks. Each of them made his own wings out of construction paper, and used pipe cleaners attached to tight fitting snow caps for their antennae.

Another popular character,The Sorceress of the North,is introduced in this scene. She should, of course, be in direct contrast to the Wicked Witch. The girl who played this role owned a lovely long ballet-type white dress since she studied dance. However, any flared party-type dress would do. The important point being that it should be very different from the Wicked Witch. A sparkler purchased in a novelty shop attached to a thin wooden dowel served as her wand. The sparkler was lighted just before the Sorceress came on stage and it sparkled for about a minute and a half. It was quite safe to use and the effect was marvelous.

There were no great changes in effects in these last two scenes. Only when the Wicked Witch made entrances were the lights flashed and the drum sounded. This gave dramatic intensity to the entrances and served as good variety.

In this scene there is a magic bridge which turns around everytime Dorothy gets onto it to head for the Wizard. This would involve a great technical problem which we were not capable of solving. However, by using the Wicked Witch off to the side of the scene magically extending her hands and screeching "Turn, turn," the problem of the bridge was solved. So much of the time this is precisely the type of thing which must be done because of the many limitations that exist. These limitations should never deter one from doing a production; there is always a simple solution.

At the end of scene four, which is the end of the first act, Dorothy, The Scarecrow, The Tin Man, and The Lion once again sing "Yellow Brick Road." The performers again went into the audience as the curtain closed on stage. This time they continued out of the auditorium into the hall. Their singing out in the hall gave a very good distant effect as they finally faded out and the act was over.

ACT II, SCENE 1

During the intermission, scene one of act two was set up. This first scene takes place in Emerald City. This was done basically in greens, but remembering that there must be some contrast and variety, spots of yellows, blues, reds, and white were added to the basic green.

A medieval castle effect was painted on the flats for Emerald City. The children did research for pictures that might be appropriate and adapted one they found to their own liking and painted it in basic green.

The costumes for the Ozians followed the same pattern. While being basically shades of green, they still had variety and contrast with other colors. The children used their own clothing and added frills and embellishments with crepe paper, paper flowers,and other materials which they had sewn on. They even painted their sneakers in different colors which added a great story-book quality to the scene.

The Emerald City scene was painted on the opposite side of Munchkinland and these flats were just turned around during intermission. If flats are not available, cardboard could be used with painting done on both sides, or large pieces of brown paper which could be hung and turned in

a similar way. The lanterns from Munchkinland were left hanging and lighted again. Both scenes lent themselves to the gaiety of the lanterns so it was justified in using them in both scenes. The first scene in the second act was played in area two, the area just behind the curtain line, and since the third scene was also Emerald City, once it was set up it could stay through the second act.

The Wizard is seen in this first scene of act two. He comes to the main square of Emerald City after having heard about Dorothy and her friends. He had to be disguised to look quite frightening, so a very large balloon was attached to a long stick that would make the balloon stand way above the crowd. The balloon was then covered with a sheet, and the children painted a monster-like face on it. Another sheet was tied around the neck of the balloon and the youngster who played the Wizard held the stick under the sheet to conceal himself. When he entered, the drum sounded, the lights flickered,and his speaking under the sheet added to the ominousness of the scene.

ACT II, SCENE 2

Area one was used for scene two, "Castle of the Wicked Witch." This scene had to be broken down into two areas, one stage left and one stage right. Stage right was the witch's area and contained a cauldron made from molded chicken wire and canvas and then painted. A cardboard box painted black would also be effective, but it would have to be large enough for the witch to fall into, for this is how she is killed in the stage version. There are two other witches in this scene, friends of the Wicked Witch. They were similarly dressed in black but had their hair different, long tresses of blonde, red, and black wool. It made the three of them marvelous caricatures which indeed they were. If possible, there could be a table and a couple of stools as the witches are supposed to be having a tea party, but this isn't absolutely necessary.

Stage left was designed as the witch's closed circuit television system. A wooden frame was used for the television set. The witch could see Dorothy and her pals walking through the forest and at the same time the audience could see both scenes. When the witch sends her ghosts out to get the four main characters, they did it right in front of the audience by going across the stage with choreographed ghost-like movements. These ghosts, the witch's aides, were draped with sheets. Holes were cut for the eyes, nose, and mouth and these holes were circled with a magic marker to give them character. The sheets were tied with rope around the neck (loosely) so that they would not come off when the ghosts did their running and jumping movements.

ACT II, SCENE 3

The third and last scene goes back to Emerald City. In this scene, Dorothy goes back to Kansas in a rocket. The rocket was made of cardboard. It was two dimensional with a cut out door so that Dorothy could climb through. The rocket was set up during scene two when the curtain was closed. For her "escape" the crowd gathered around the rocket so that she might go behind one of the flats of Emerald City without the audience seeing. Then

as the crowd waved their farewells, the rocket flew up. A simple clothesline rope was tied to the top of the rocket, strung over one of the pipes that was above the stage, and pulled up on cue. If there isn't enough room to fly the rocket, it could be made smaller and not to "scale." Masking curtains could be lowered slightly to cater to the dimensions of the rocket.

This, then, is essentially what it took to put on the production WIZARD OF OZ. It was not at all complicated, and the pure joy the children derived from doing it was well worth the effort. The children still talk about it.

GLOSSARY OF STAGE TERMS

Act curtain: the curtain closest to the audience which indicates the beginning of the show, the intermissions, and the end of the play.

Acting area: the portion of the stage where the action of the play takes place.

Ad-lib: filling in with lines not in the actual playscript.

Apron: the part of the stage in front of the main curtain.

Aside: dialogue to be heard only by the audience and not the other actors on stage.

Backdrop: a large piece of material hung at the back of the stage.

Back wall: the rear wall of the stage.

Batten: a long piece of pipe from which scenery and lights, draperies, etc.,are hung.

Blocking: The process of setting the physical movement patterns of the play whereby the actors move around the acting area in a manner appropriate to their characters.

Breakdown: an analysis of all elements for staging the play.

Business: any action on the stage usually involving a prop.

C: letter indicating the center of the stage.

Cast: the actors in a given play; to choose the actors for the play.

Close: to turn and play away from the audience.

Cover: to obscure or hide an actor or some action from the audience.

Crew: a group or committee of people working on one element of a play's production.

Cross: Moving from one location to another on the stage; can be in front of another actor.

Cue: the last several words or action of an actor immediately preceding the lines or action of another actor.

Cue sheet: a listing of cues for lights, sound effects, curtains, etc.

Curtain line: the imaginary floor line touched by a curtain when it is closed.

Cut: to stop an action or to delete it.

Cut in: to break into the speech of another character.

Cut-out: a small flat with irregular form to resemble mountains, trees, clouds, etc. Could be cardboard, plywood, etc.

Dialogue: the lines in a play

Dimmer: an electrical system used to vary the intensity of lights.

Down (or downstage): the part of the stage closest to the audience. Usually abbreviated with the letter "D". Downstage - "DS".

Dress the stage: to set the stage with the necessary scenery appropriate to the scene and the play.

Drop: a canvas cloth hung from a batten upon which scenery can be painted.

Exit: to leave the acting area.

Faking: imitating some action or object for theatrical purposes.

Feed lines: to give lines in such a way that another actor can make a point or get a laugh; also to prompt.

Flat: a piece of upright scenery made from a wooden frame covered with material usually canvas.

Floor plan: a drawing showing exactly how the scenery will be arranged on the stage. The view is as if one were at the top of the stage and looking down.

Fly: to raise or lower scenery.

Gelatin or gel: transparent colored plastic in thin sheets placed on lighting instruments to produce different colors.

Hand prop: some article carried on stage by an actor.

Hold for laughs: to wait for audience reaction to subside.

Hold it: to remain still or to stop some action.

House: the part of the theatre occupied by the audience.

Kill: to do away with some action, a light cue, a line, etc.

Left: the left of the stage from the actor's viewpoint; that is, it is his left as he faces the audience - stage left (SL).

Masking: any way of concealing an area that the audience is not supposed to see.

Offstage: away from the part of the stage that can be seen.

On stage: the part of the stage comprising the acting area.

Open: turning and playing toward the audience.

Promptbook: a complete script showing all plans and cues for all technical aspects as well as the actors' lines and action.

Props or properties:
any object used in the play except scenery and costumes.

Proscenium: the frame enclosing the stage through which the audience views the proceedings.

Rake: to slant at an angle.

Ramp: a sloping platform from the stage to an elevation.

Reading: a time when the whole cast meets with the director to read and discuss the play.

Scrim: a transparent curtain used for visions, dreams, etc.

Sight lines: imaginary lines marking the limits of the audience visibility; no stage action should go beyond them.

Stage Left and Stage right:
directions applying to the stage as the actor faces the audience.

Staging: setting into motion the action of the play by moving the actors into different positions. (See Blocking)

Strike: to remove something from the stage.

Take stage: to hold the center of interest and to dominate the scene.

Teaser: a short drop hung behind the act curtain usually to mask the front batten of onstage lights. There could be several of these teasers.

Tempo: the speed of speech and action in the play.

Timing: the execution of speeches or business with a specific tempo to achieve the most effective dramatic intensity.

Traveler: a curtain which is hung on a pulley system and opens at the middle of the stage.

Up or **Up**stage (US):
the area away from the audience toward the back wall. Also means to improperly take away the focus of the most important element in the scene.

Wagon: a low platform on casters whereby sets can be wheeled onto the acting area very easily.

Wings: the offstage area to the right and left.